

on December 19, 2020, at the age of 87. Justice Abrahamson was a consummate public servant who was passionately driven by the principle of fairness when applying the law and serving the people of Wisconsin. Her unparalleled commitment to judicial independence and justice had an immeasurable impact on Wisconsin's judicial system and the countless women and men who have been inspired to work in public service by her leadership. She was the first woman to serve on the Wisconsin Supreme Court and the first woman to serve as chief justice, but her legacy is even richer than those exceptional accomplishments.

Justice Abrahamson's life had modest beginnings in New York City in 1933, as the child of Polish immigrants. Her passion for the law started at the tender age of 6, when she decided she wanted to become a lawyer. Those who knew her at all stages of life—from childhood to retirement—consistently commented on her thirst for learning. She was a voracious reader even at a very young age and a dedicated student, earning honors in high school and college.

Justice Abrahamson graduated magna cum laude with a bachelor's degree from New York University in 1953. She earned a law degree with high distinction from Indiana University in 1956 and a doctor of law in American Legal History from the University of Wisconsin Law School in 1962. Justice Abrahamson began her career as a practicing attorney and distinguished professor at the University of Wisconsin Law School.

Justice Abrahamson's career is an inspiration to all women who are fighting forces that tell them they don't belong because of their gender. She faced significant discrimination when she entered the legal profession in the 1950s. From being denied employment at a law firm after graduating first in her class at Indiana University, to the denial of jobs, clients, and even social club memberships because of her gender, Justice Abrahamson remained undaunted by prejudice. She refused to back down from those who stood in the way of a woman's path to success in the legal profession. She carried that steadfast commitment to fairness and equality in her work on the court.

In 1976, Justice Abrahamson broke the glass ceiling in Wisconsin's judicial system by becoming the first female justice on the Wisconsin Supreme Court. She again changed the judicial landscape in 1996 when she became the first woman to serve as chief justice. For the chief, serving on the supreme court meant serving the people of Wisconsin as an independent, fair, and impartial justice because, after all, the court and our court system belong to the people, not powerful special interests. That is why she spent a lot of her time traveling the State, meeting with people. Whether it was meeting with local judges, riding along with local law enforcement, or meeting with ad-

vocates for victims of sexual assault and domestic violence, she always understood that you can't serve the people if you don't walk in their shoes. That is why the people of Wisconsin elected her to the supreme court four times and she served 43 years on the court—serving the people.

The late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg said Justice Abrahamson was “most courageous and sage, and ever mindful of the people—all the people—that the law exists or should exist to serve.”

Justice Abrahamson was cherished and respected as a mentor, teacher, advocate, wife, mother, grandmother and friend. She was known for her strong work ethic, often the last person working at night at the State capitol preparing for a case. Even as she faced pancreatic cancer at the end of her last term on the State supreme court, Justice Abrahamson fearlessly continued working, noting, “On any day in this state, more than a quarter-million people are facing a cancer diagnosis.” She tried to make the law more accessible and understandable to clients and the general public and brought a caring perspective to her professional and personal interactions. Her passion was also seen outside of the courtroom in her travels and treasured relationships with family and friends.

Justice Abrahamson was a true American hero. From her incomparable tenure on the Wisconsin Supreme Court to her efforts as a pioneer for gender equality, Justice Abrahamson lived a life devoted to service and justice for all. Her greatest legacy is the trail she blazed for countless young women, who can see themselves in a courtroom or on a judicial bench because of the barriers she fearlessly broke through. She will shine in Wisconsin's history as one of the most influential women who shaped not only our judicial institutions but the State as a whole.

TRIBUTE TO NEIL HEINEN

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, today I rise to honor Neil Heinen, editorial director for WISC-TV and Madison Magazine, on his retirement. Throughout his remarkable career, Neil has been steadfast in his commitment to fair and honest reporting, clear-headed editorials and fascinating stories about the community he loves.

Born in Milwaukee, WI as the oldest of 11 children, Neil first attended St. Norbert College in Green Bay in 1969. He dropped out to spend 4 years working in a mental hospital, where he said he received his real education. He worked as a bartender and actor in Madison before deciding to study journalism at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He began his career at WIBA radio station, spending 10 years on the air before joining the team at WISC-TV News as a news assignment editor.

It was there that Neil worked with longtime station manager Tom Bier to

create an editorial director job just as most stations were eliminating their editorial departments. Neil delivered more than 7,400 on-air editorials since he first conveyed the station's views in April of 1992. He also hosted a Sunday morning public affairs program, “For the Record,” that ran 1,500 episodes over 30 years.

Perhaps Neil's greatest legacy is his leadership in guiding the growth and creativity of Madison Magazine, which won countless awards for providing its nearly 170,000 readers with interesting coverage of local people, entertainment, and issues. Neil's contributions included monthly columns on issues of importance to Madisonians and a monthly food column he coauthored with his wife, Nancy Christy. Madison readers particularly enjoyed his cover stories focused on leadership and visions for Madison's future.

Neil has been a familiar and trusted voice in many of Madison's most important events and controversial issues for the past 30 years. He is known for his support of major community projects such as the Monona Terrace Convention Center, the UW-Madison Kohl Center and Overture Center for the Arts. He helped launch We the People/Wisconsin, one of the most successful civic journalism projects in the country in the 1990s, and worked to start Schools of Hope, an initiative to help close the achievement gap in Madison schools.

While Neil's last day of work was this past September 15, I know he will remain active in the community for many years to come, lending his voice to complex community conversations and championing causes that bring us together. I will be forever grateful for Neil's commitment to the Madison community and for offering his wise perspective in critical times.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO DALE HANKINS

• Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, this week I have the honor of recognizing Dale Hankins of Chouteau County for volunteering countless hours to support his fellow veterans.

When Dale was 10 years old, a friend of his father, a WWII vet, carried a diamond willow cane. Dale was so intrigued by the way the diamonds stood out, he couldn't take his eyes off of it. At the age of 17, he made his first attempt at carving a cane, and soon realized and appreciated the effort it took to create such beautiful craftsmanship. By the time he finished, his hands were so full of blisters he decided to pursue other hobbies.

Dale later joined the U.S. Army and served in Charlie Company, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, as an airborne infantry soldier. After receiving his honorable discharge, he returned to Montana and joined the Montana Army National Guard. Having a